

## The Shifting Gaze in Stephen Crane's "The Monster"

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The immense mobility and the total confinement associated with, respectively, the flâneur and the panoptic prisoner are so entirely at odds that it seems unlikely that any character could possibly be characterized as both in the space of a single short story. However, Henry Johnson does, indeed, display important tenets of both flânerie and panopticism in Stephen Crane's "The Monster." Henry begins as a character who displays many characteristics of the flâneur. However, he is not in fact a perfect flâneur, and his overly conspicuous attempt to break free of the constrictions of his race and to change how others perceive him causes him to shift to the role of the panoptic prisoner. As such, he is subject to the negative effects of constant scrutiny and is confined even more than he is at the beginning of the story. Interestingly, the illustrations originally published alongside the story in *Harper's* seem to support this view of Henry and his shifting roles, whether intended to do so or not. Henry's change, then, from flâneur to panoptic prisoner is clearly represented in Crane's story and is, in fact, reinforced in many ways by the illustrations that accompanied the original publication of "The Monster."

In the early chapters of the story, Henry takes

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the leisurely stroll through the small city of Whilomville that is so typical of a flâneur. Crane repeatedly illustrates the leisurely aspect of Henry's walk, describing perfectly "the activity of strolling and looking" which defines flânerie (Tester 1). As soon as he emerges from his room, even, Henry is described as he "sauntered down the carriage drive" and begins his night "out for an evening stroll" (Crane 79). The fact that Henry is out for a relaxing walk is never lost on the reader, who sees Henry as almost constantly in motion. He joins the "leisurely crowd" as he paces down the boulevard, and the remarks he receives are all concerned with the stroll that makes Henry look, to some characters, as if he is "going to walk for a cake to-night" (80). These characters view Henry as a stereotypical "coon," viewing his sauntering as a "cake walk" despite the fact that Henry clearly feels that he is out for a leisurely stroll. When Henry eventually reaches the home of Bella Farragut, her mother immediately greets him, saying, "Walk in, Misteh Johnson, walk in" (82). This emphasis on Henry as someone out for a walk is reinforced, as well, by the first illustration in the series that accompanied the original publication of "The Monster" in *Harper's Magazine* (Fig. 1). This illustration also stresses the flânerie of Henry, through its simple depiction of Henry strolling forward. Through all of these references to walking, Crane repeatedly emphasizes Henry's evening stroll, the type of stroll that "represents a classic statement of flânerie" (Tester 9).

The leisure of this stroll and the unhurried use of Henry's time further proves Henry to be a flâ-



Fig. 1. Both the mobility and the visual ability of the flâneur are depicted in this illustration, in which Henry is seen walking forward and gazing directly at the viewer as if able to see the person who is looking at him. Newell, Peter. "No One Would Have Suspected Him Of Ever Having Washed A Buggy." *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 97:579 (Aug. 1898): 345.

neur. The flâneur is one who moves at a slower pace than that of the increasingly fast-paced city that was emerging in this early modern time period (Jenks 149). Flânerie is defined by a leisurely pace, one that might be seen as a “response to the increasing speed of circulation (of traffic, commodities, thoughts) in the nineteenth century” (Tester 15). Not only is Henry’s walk decidedly leisurely, considering descriptions of his walk as a “stroll” in which he “sauntered” (Crane 79), but his entire demeanor shows him to be as unconcerned with time like the typical flâneur. He dresses himself “with much care,” presumably spending a fair amount of time as well as thought on his wardrobe and toilet (79). After his stroll through the city, he spends his hours leisurely in the company of the Farraguts, simply enjoying the time as they “bowed and smiled and ignored and imitated until a late hour” (82). Directly following this scene of leisure are the descriptions of the city and its fire company as it rushes to the fire



*Fig. 2. The pace of the city is presented through the implied rapid movement of the firefighters rushing to reach the burning home. Newell, Peter. “What District?” Harper’s Monthly Magazine 97:579 (Aug. 1898): 351.*

at the Trescott home. The illustration of the firemen makes especially clear the rapidity of the rest of the city (Fig. 2). The aforementioned illustration of Henry, however, implies his own leisurely pace and provides a contrast to the frantic pace of the firemen. These illustrations, then, seem to perfectly depict the slow pace of the flâneur juxtaposed with the quick pace of the city.

The flâneur’s mobility is also emphasized by Henry’s leisurely walks in the midst of the townspeople. He possesses this mobility as he strolls down the streets and amongst the people of Whilomville. He is completely uninhibited as he saunters through the thoroughfares of mainly white citizens to the “narrow side street” of the black neighborhood where Bella Farragut lives (Crane 82). Whilomville, like other cities and large towns, is divided into separate spaces based upon factors

such as the relative safety of a given neighborhood or the people who live in that district (Jenks 143-144). The flâneur is one who can freely move between these different areas, and Henry certainly does so (146). Even as a black man, he successfully navigates through the sections of town largely populated by white people and seems to feel as if he fits in perfectly in this section of town, despite his race. As he strolls, Henry “moves through space and among the people” with great ease, showing him to be an example of the successful flâneur Jenks describes (146).

It is this mobility that Anne Friedberg emphasizes as an important part of the visual aspect of flânerie (Friedberg 396). Henry, like the typical flâneur, “cannot be pinned down” by those around him (Jenks 147). Crane illustrates this precisely with the image of the men in the barbershop who look out onto the street at the passersby, who “resembled the inhabitants of a great aquarium” (81). The men continue to watch as “presently into this frame swam the graceful form of Henry Johnson” (81). This scene is depicted in the second illustration in the series, which shows the men straining their necks and pressing their faces against the glass in

order to catch a glimpse of Henry (Fig. 3); however, like the typical flâneur, he is unrestrained in his mobility and has clearly passed by already. Henry, then, is free to swim into and out of the frame of vision of other characters as he chooses. Importantly, Henry is not only able to move in and out of the sight of others, but his mobility applies to his own sight as well as his



*Fig. 3. Although the men in the barbershop wish to survey him, Henry is free to move in and out of their line of vision and appears to have already passed. As a flâneur, Henry's mobility allows him to decide where he will go and who will see him. Newell, Peter: "Henry Johnson! Rats!" Harper's Monthly Magazine 97:579 (Aug. 1898): 349.*

physical movement. Since Henry can walk freely about the town, he is free to see everything and everyone around him, and he is completely aware of who is watching him at all times. He is described as “not at all oblivious of the wake of wondering ejaculation that streamed out behind him” (Crane 81). Similarly,

the first illustration from *Harper's* shows Henry gazing directly forward out of the illustration and at the viewer, as if to further display his visual ability, as a flâneur, to see those who are watching him (Fig. 1). Henry is able to clearly see those who see him and chooses to stroll through the streets because he gains pleasure from the spectacle of the crowds and from being watched by others. Still, he is always free to move in and out of the line of vision of those around him, just as he swims into and out of the aquarium-like frame of vision of the men in the barbershop.

Part of his success in moving between the various sectors of the city results from Henry's ability to create meaning in what he sees, a typical ability of the flâneur (Tester 3-4). Henry is far from abashed or offended by the "quiet admonitions and compliments" of those on the main thoroughfare who ask him if he is going on a cake-walk and the comments of other white characters who refer to him as a "coon" (Crane 80). Rather, Henry laughs with a hidden feeling of being of "superior metal" and reaps joy from the looks and "wondering ejaculations" that follow in his wake (80-82). It seems rather far-fetched to believe that Henry does not understand the demeaning nature of many of the comments made about him in the white sections of Whilomville, and he would most likely have been familiar with the "coon" stereotype of the times and its connotations. It might seem more likely, then, that rather than being completely ignorant of the derisive remarks of those around him, Henry acts in the role of the flâneur by recreating the meaning of the stares and comments he receives. As a flâneur, "he defines the order of things for himself rather than allowing things or appearances to be defining for themselves" (Tester 4). Henry redefines his situation, classifying himself as one of "superior metal" and the stares and comments of those around him as expressions of admiration (Crane 80-82). Chris Jenks describes this activity of the flâneur as a sort of re-positioning of existing elements into an entirely new synthesis (155), and explains this process further:

The two principles of the practice are: (a) that each re-used element from a previous context must be divested of its autonomy and original signification; and (b) that the re-assembly of elements must forge an original image which generates a wholly new meaning structure for the parts, through the totality that they now comprise. (155-156)

Henry assigns new meaning to the reactions of those around him and to the status of himself and other characters in order to “forge an original image” in which he is no longer the foolish coon mocked by the white citizens of Whilomville, but is instead a valued and admired member of the community. Not only is this a typical practice of the flâneur, but it also preserves his mobility by aiding Henry, as a black man, in successfully navigating through the white areas of town.

In this recreation of meaning, Henry acts as the flâneur by placing himself in a new role or wearing a sort of mask. Henry's entire demeanor changes when he goes out for his evening stroll, and, as James Nagel writes, Henry acts “as a person of considerable substance who plays a role in society quite beyond his humble economic station” (54). This change that Nagel describes is the change of a flâneur placing himself in a new role. Crane describes the change in Henry through his interactions with a friend: in his working clothes he greets him casually and addresses him as “Pete,” but once out on his leisurely walk Henry bows and addresses his friend as “Misteh Washington” (79). Michael Warner argues that it is this gentlemanly part which Henry plays so well that allows him to win over Bella, and even Jimmie, who attributes importance to Henry because of the importance Henry attributes to himself (78-80).

However, Crane seems to imply that there is more than just a surface change to Henry. He states that “the change was somewhere far in the interior of Henry... He was simply a quiet, well-bred gentleman of position, wealth, and other necessary achievements out for an evening stroll” (79). Henry, then, does not seem to simply play a role, but in fact *becomes* the gentleman out for a stroll. Like the typical flâneur described by Tester, he has the freedom of self-definition but still also derives a sense of himself from the crowds through which he wanders (7-8). Henry, as a flâneur, “revolves around the dialectic of self-definition and definition from outside” (8). In creating his own meaning in every situation, Henry creates his own definition of himself as the typical gentleman out for a stroll and assigns meanings to the things around him that further validate this self-definition. Henry first dresses himself in what he considers to be the proper clothes of a gentleman and acts in the ways he believes a gentleman should act. Then, on his stroll, he chooses to interpret the reactions of those in the white district of the city as manifestations of their admiration. Furthermore, he purposefully pretends not to see Bella as she runs off to change from her “calico frock” so that she can later sweep into the room

gracefully and signify, for Henry, the genteel lady of society that he, as a gentleman, is courting (Crane 82). Warner seems to recognize this activity of *flânerie* as Crane's ability to "frustrate the whole attempt" (81) by the reader to make distinctions between the surface and the interior of Henry's character, and he decides that, in the end, "surface and interior are in fact interchangeable" (82). For Henry, the surface and interior *are* absolutely interchangeable, but precisely because Henry acts as a *flâneur* in creating his own definition of his interior self, while also deriving this sense of self from his surface appearance, as well as from his interpretations of the appearances of those around him.

However, despite having all of these attributes, Henry is an imperfect *flâneur* because he so desires to be observed by others and reaps such joy from being watched. As Tester states, the *flâneur* "is the centre of an order of things of his own making even though, to others, he appears to be just one constituent part of the metropolitan flux" (3). While a typical *flâneur* tends to move among the crowds inconspicuously, Henry is eager to be watched by those around him and "reaped this same joy" (Crane 81-82) of being gazed upon during his walk. Henry clearly enters into his stroll with the expectation and desire to be seen by others and revels in the attention he receives. Crane seems to portray Henry, then, as the *flâneur* who participates in the act of *flânerie* for the wrong reason. It would appear that for Crane, motive is an extremely important factor and the one that brings about Henry's downfall. After the fire and Henry's disfigurement, Henry's role shifts dramatically. Once the mobile and surveying *flâneur*, Henry becomes, essentially, the complete opposite: the panoptic prisoner. It is as if his flaw, his love of being observed, becomes his punishment, and after his disfigurement, he is placed under intense, constant, and negative scrutiny. From the very moment that Henry is carried out of the burning building, the reader senses a change, for he is described as "a thing" laid on the grass (94). From this moment on, Henry is the constantly surveyed, panoptic prisoner of the story.

It also seems quite possible that Henry's race is another contributing factor in his downfall. Henry, in his eagerness to be seen by others, never masters the inconspicuous nature of the *flâneur* and never fully blends into the "metropolitan flux" (Tester 3). Though he does have the freedom to redefine himself and become the gentleman he wishes to be, Henry seems to desire more than to just change his own concept of himself. His eagerness to be viewed on his stroll seems to indicate Henry's desire to change other people's perceptions of

him and to break free of the constrictions put upon him by his race. The main reason that the gentlemanly image Henry creates for himself is so laughable to the white citizens of Whilomville is that Henry is a black man. By so conspicuously attempting to make himself into a different type of person than the one that society expects him to be, Henry becomes unable and unwilling to be the typical flâneur and the typical African American of this time. Crane seems to suggest that such an open attempt to move beyond the restrictions of race and to change others' perceptions of him cannot end successfully for a black man during this time period. Considering the fact that African Americans, at this time, were often subject to constant scrutiny and surveillance by the public, as well as so often left voiceless and narrowly confined by society, it seems that Henry's transformation into the panoptic prisoner is not only a fitting punishment for his inability to be an inconspicuous flâneur but also for his obvious attempt to break free of the restrictions of his race.

After he is burned, Henry's mobility is immediately taken from him. Like the panoptic prisoner, he is utterly confined, as if trapped within one of the panopticon's "many cages" (Foucault 64). He must first remain within Judge Hangenthorpe's home as he recovers, and then is moved to Alek Williams' home. There, he resides mostly within the inner room of the house. However, Henry does not simply accept or succumb to his new role immediately, and attempts to utilize the mobility of the flâneur once more in the story. After he escapes from the Williams' house, Henry roams Whilomville just as he had often previously done, but with far different results. He can no longer pass easily through the various districts of town, as is demonstrated by the horror expressed by the inhabitants of each area. Henry's earlier attempts to break free of the constrictions of his race may be seen, in a way, to have led to this later moment, in which Henry is no longer accepted by people of any race, black or white. It is almost as if Henry is being fittingly punished for attempting to move beyond the confines of his race, since he is now, with his deformed face, somehow beyond race altogether. Later, the town's violent disapproval of Henry's attempt at mobility is displayed when Henry "began to run, and a big crowd chased him, firing rocks" (Crane 118). Eventually, Henry's walk culminates in his being jailed by the police. So, not only is Henry confined to different homes in the latter part of the story, but he is also eventually physically incarcerated, just like the panoptic prisoner.

Henry also becomes completely isolated from those around him, and is

left almost completely devoid of typical human interaction. Henry is confined in the same way as the panoptic prisoner Miller describes: within a sphere in which it is “impossible to communicate with any adjacent cells” (Miller 4). Henry is scarcely spoken to in the latter half of the novel, and his previous interactions with Jimmie deteriorate considerably. Rather than talk with Henry, Jimmie only uses him as an attraction and amusement to impress his friends, reaping “all the joys of the owner and exhibitor of one of the world’s marvels” (Crane 123). Interestingly, Henry’s former enjoyment of being surveyed by others



“IF YOU AIN’T AFRAID, GO DO IT THEN.”

*Fig. 4. Henry’s solitude and inability to see those who view him, both characteristic of the panoptic prisoner, are here depicted through the distance between the boys and Henry and through the veil that hinders Henry’s ability to see. Newell, Peter. “If You Ain’t Afraid, Go Do It Then.” Harper’s Monthly Magazine 97:579 (Aug. 1898): 373.*

seems to have been replaced by Jimmie’s enjoyment in surveying Henry with his friends. Jimmie’s friendship with and respect for Henry has changed to “a weird fascination” (122), effectively leaving Henry alone and isolated once more. The “sequestered and observed solitude” (Foucault 65) of a panoptic prisoner applies perfectly to Henry and is well captured in one illustration, in which Jimmie is depicted displaying and talking about Henry, who sits alone at a considerable distance from the group of boys (Fig. 4). Henry is now the panoptic prisoner and, as such, is “the object of information, never a subject in communication” (Foucault 65).

Much of Henry’s isolation also seems to result from his inability to create meaning and define himself and his existence. He has become the panoptic prisoner who, being sequestered and immobile, is no longer in control of himself and his situation. Henry is no longer able to define himself as a gentleman;

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his disfigurement and the community have now defined him as a “thing” or a “monster.” Henry attempts to be the perfect gentleman once again when he returns to the Farragut home, and acts in almost exactly the same way as he had in the earlier chapters of the story. Henry politely bows and attempts to exchange pleasantries with Bella, sounding much the same as he did before: his greeting of “I jes drap in ter ax if yer well this evenin’, Miss Fa’gut” (116) echoes his speech, during his earlier visit, of “good-evenin’, Mis’ Fa’gut; good-evenin’. How is you dis evenin’?” (82). However, Henry is no longer successful in his endeavors to define himself as a gentleman, for he is described as “a monster making a low and sweeping bow” and as “the monster” who raises “a deprecatory claw” (116). After entering the house, he is merely “the monster ... gabbling courteous invitations” (117). Although he acts in completely the same way, the Farraguts flee from Henry and Bella throws herself upon the floor in “a last outbreak of despair” (117). The horror expressed by Mrs. Farragut as she attempts to flee from Henry is written upon her face in one illustration by Newell (Fig. 5). Perhaps Newell recognized that there really is no need to depict Henry in this scene because, besides his physical appearance, nothing about him has changed. As Nagel points out, “he expects to be treated as a human being, and he behaves as he did before the fire” (56). It is only the reaction to him that is different.

It is truly the perceptions of him held by others that seem to define Henry



MRS. FARRAGUT.  
*Fig. 5. The look of horror on Mrs. Farragut's face is a clear representation of the changed response, by the citizens of Whilomville, to Henry's essentially unchanged behavior. Newell, Peter. "Mrs. Farragut." Harper's Monthly Magazine 97.579 (Aug. 1898): 368.*

and his existence in the latter portion of the story, just as the perceptions of others, in effect, define any panoptic prisoner. Henry is like the prisoner of the panopticon who is completely controlled by the “all-seeing, omnipresent, omniscient body” (Miller 4), which in Henry’s case consists of the citizens of Whilomville. Henry is left powerless, completely defined by those around him. His attempts to change others’ perceptions of him and to move beyond the constrictions of race have utterly failed. He is no longer free even to decide his fate; in the penultimate chapter of the story, five men from Whilomville discuss what to do about Henry and how he should live out the remainder of his life. One illustration depicts this scene, in which the caption of “‘It’s about what nobody talks of—much,’ said Twelve” reminds readers, in a somewhat



*Fig. 6. In this depiction of a meeting concerning Henry’s future, the white male citizens of the town act as the guards of the panoptic prison and exert their power over Henry, who is notably absent from the process of deciding his own fate. Newell, Peter. “‘It’s About What Nobody Talks Of—Much,’ Said Twelve.” Harper’s Monthly Magazine 97:579 (Aug. 1898): 377.*

ironic way, that the topic of discussion is in fact Henry Johnson, who is, however, absent from the picture as he is from the discussion concerning his own future (Fig. 6). One man suggests that Henry be sent to a “public institution,” while John Twelve offers to give Henry his “little no-good farm up beyond Clarence Mountain” (Crane 134). Twelve seems to feel “that once the monster is removed from sight the matter will be settled” (Nagel 54), which perfectly limns the irony of the fact that the population of Whilomville has put Henry under intense scrutiny and surveillance with their constant gaze and discussion of him, but that they seem to desire nothing more than to not have to physically see him. The citizens of Whilomville seek total control over Henry but wish

to keep him separate from them, just as the operators of the panoptic regime seek to control its prisoners from a safe distance. This also seems to mirror the

fact that the white citizens of Whilomville wish to have control over the black population of the town while keeping that population physically separate from them, in another geographic area of the city.

The population of Whilomville has clearly taken on the role of the “unseen seer” in the central guard tower of the panopticon. Henry is no longer free to move in and out of the city’s gaze; he is now constantly surveyed by those around him. Crane seems to emphasize the visual abilities of other characters throughout the second half of the story through the emphasis on their eyes. A prime example of this is in chapter 15, which shows the Williams family as they house Henry in the inner room of their home. In the space of about a page and a half, Crane uses

the word “eyes” six times and includes numerous references to the visual gaze of the Williams family, who, like the panoptic overseer, watches the confined space within which Henry resides (Crane III-III2). Crane describes most of the activity of this scene in terms of the Williams’ surveillance of Henry: Alek’s “glance travelled swiftly to the inner door,” he is depicted “waving his eyes toward the inner door,” his wife follows this “glance timorously,” and both “pointed their speech and their looks at the inner door” (III-III2). The depiction of this scene in the *Harper’s* illustrations, as well, emphasizes the fact that



“THE DOOR SWUNG PORTENTOUSLY OPEN.”

*Fig. 7. This depiction, in many ways, bears quite a resemblance to a panoptic prison in which Henry is the prisoner and the Williams family takes on the role of overseer: the prisoner is confined within the dark space of the bedroom, the gaze of the overseer is directed towards the prisoner, and the emphasis is placed upon the surveyors, who are placed in the foreground of the illustration, and their ability to gaze on the prisoner. Newell, Peter. “The Door Swung Portentously Open.” Harper’s Monthly Magazine 97.579 (Aug. 1898): 367.*

the sole activity of the Williams family is the surveillance of Henry through its depiction of all of the family members staring at the inner door (Fig. 7). Diction used to describe visual ability is applied to nearly all of the characters who interact in some way with Henry in the latter half of the story. In the case of

Sim Farragut, for example, the mere sight of Henry makes “his eyes st[il]ck out” (Crane 116). Certainly, the other characters in the story have now become the operators of the panoptic prison in which Henry must reside.

The destruction of Henry’s face might be seen as the emblematic representation of his new role as the panoptic prisoner, for his visual abilities are greatly impaired, presumably, in both instances. As a panoptic prisoner, certainly, Henry’s ability to see is completely stripped from him; as in the panopticon, there is a sudden and “brutal dissymmetry of visibility” between him and the other characters in the story who constantly survey him (Miller 4). Henry “is seen, but does not see” (Foucault 65). Besides his brief escape into the city, Henry has no ability to fix his gaze on anything but what is presented to him. In the case of the Williams’ home, for example, his sight is completely taken from him when he is locked inside of the inner room. Unlike his first visit to the Farraguts where “Henry saw it all” (Crane 82), there is no mention of Henry’s sight in the second visit, during which the emphasis is placed on how the Farraguts view Henry. Furthermore, Henry is no longer able to see those who view him in the same way he did earlier, when he was aware of the comments of those around him and actively viewed them as expressions of admiration. In this case, it is simply unclear as to whether or not he sees the reactions of those who view him.

Interestingly, it is also unclear to what degree Henry’s physical ability to see has been impaired, though it seems that he does have at least some ability to see after his disfigurement. This seems symbolically appropriate, for while he can still see physically, he attempts to break free of any constrictions and be the flâneur once again by escaping to wander through Whilomville. Obviously, he fails, for his disfigurement has caused him to shift into the place of panoptic prisoner. During the latter portion of the story, Henry seems to transition into his role as panoptic prisoner. Wolford claims that in Crane’s short fiction, “fate is a kind of straitjacket that the protagonist knowingly or unknowingly dons. Slowly, the jacket tightens, and the choices become fewer and fewer” (44). In the case of Henry, it seems that it is more specifically the surveillance of the panopticon, rather than fate, that tightens like a straitjacket for Henry until he is fully a prisoner. No more attempts to escape by Henry occur in the story after he is jailed, and after being released, his physical ability to see is stripped from him even further when he dons a veil.

The culmination of Henry’s shift to the panoptic prisoner seems to occur in

chapter twenty, when Jimmie and his friends encounter Henry. Henry appears under the “full lighting and the eye of a supervisor” of the panoptic prisoner in his cell (Foucault 64). He is surveyed by Jimmie and his friends as he is “seated on a box behind the stable basking in the rays of the afternoon sun” (Crane 122). Furthermore, his ability to see those who survey him is presumably gone, for “a heavy crepe veil was swathed about its head” (122). In the illustration, he is not even facing the boys and makes no attempt to discern who is watching him (Fig. 4). Though Henry cannot see who is watching him, he seems aware of being watched, for in Crane’s description, “at the sound the monster slowly turned its head” (122). One might assume that, like the panoptic prisoner, it is this awareness of being constantly surveyed that stops Henry from attempting the stroll of the flâneur and resigns him to simply sitting on a box behind the stable. Henry no longer attempts to break free of the confines of his race, and is in fact now subject to even greater constrictions, as a societal pariah, to which he willingly submits. As Foucault describes, “He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself ... he becomes the principle of his own subjection” (66). This scene, then, shows Henry’s ultimate submission to the panoptic gaze and the “sense of disciplined surveillance” that causes him to accept his role as the panoptic prisoner (Friedberg 397).

“The Monster” is the story of one man’s shifting visual abilities and all of the associations that go along with that change. Henry Johnson essentially loses all of the mobility, social interactions, and power he has in the early chapters of Crane’s story. His loss can be seen more clearly in light of the theories of flânerie and panopticism and in terms of racial boundaries during this time period. Crane clearly demonstrates Henry’s attempt at flânerie, which is flawed due to his eagerness to be watched and his conspicuous attempt to change the way others view him, despite his race, and his attempts at flânerie, therefore, ultimately must fail. Henry eventually becomes the prisoner of the very gaze he revels in at the story’s beginning.

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